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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : SAC (157-1067)

DATE: 7/3/68

FROM : SA WILLIAM H. LAWRENCE

SUBJECT: BLACK ORGANIZING PROJECT (BOP), aka

It will be recalled that on Sunday, 6/8/68, a radio broadcast was heard by writer on WDIA Radio Station, Memphis, Tennessee, a Negro-oriented station managed by the Sonderling Radio Station chain, and locally managed by BERT FERGUSON, a white male who helped found the station and who has always been a close friend of this office.

This program was entitled "Young America Speaks," and the initial show, moderated by WDIA announcer, a young Negro, CHRIS TURNER, featured BOP leaders CHARLES L. CABBAGE and JOHN BURRELL SMITH.

This program was highly controversial in nature. Both SMITH and CABBAGE made pro-communist utterances, whether they realized that they were or not, and utterances which could lead emotional people to engage in violence.

TURNER seemed to side with CABBAGE and SMITH. SMITH used the African name MOZAN N. RURA on the program.

On 6/13/68 BERT FERGUSON made available to writer a copy of a tape of this show, which has been recorded and transcribed. The tape is retained in the 1-B section of 157-1067. The tape has been transcribed and incorporated in FD-302's, one copy each of which is channelized to each copy of instant memorandum.

On 6/13/68 FERGUSON stated that WDIA has its programming aimed at the Negro community although it is owned by whites. It has taken pride in having the largest listening audience of any radio station in the Memphis and Mid-South area and has learned recently that the ratings

1-157-1067
1-157-957 - [redacted]
1-100-4528 - [redacted]
1-157-1022 - Black Nationalist Movement
1-157-556 - Possible Racial Violence, Major Urban Areas
1-157-1168 - Racial Situation in Tennessee

WHL:wp
(6)

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of WDIA have dropped, particularly in the 16 to 21-year age category. The management of WDIA accordingly desires to increase its teenage listeners and FERGUSON has recently hired a couple of young disc jockeys from Atlanta, Georgia, ROBERT HIX, who uses the name Fat Man on the air because he is actually thin and small in stature, and one CHRIS A. TURNER. Both HIX and TURNER formerly worked for a radio station, WIGO, in Atlanta, and HIX preceded TURNER. HIX appears to be a personable, intelligent young man who does not appear to have any "way-out ideas." TURNER appears to be personable, very intelligent, allegedly went to Northwestern University prior to working in Atlanta. He wants to continue his education at Memphis State University. He has a wife and two children.

FERGUSON stated that he was partially responsible for having the Invaders or Black Power people on the first program, feeling that this would stimulate interest, and he had urged TURNER to get the leader of the Ku Klux Klan to debate with the leader of the Invaders but TURNER did not know how to get in touch with any Klansmen. Thereafter FERGUSON suggested to TURNER that he get Chief of Police HENRY LUX, Memphis, to debate with one of the Invaders but LUX refused, and TURNER ended up interviewing both CHARLES L. CABBAGE and JOHN B. SMITH on the opening program.

FERGUSON did not hear the original program but has listened to the tape and pointed out that he was somewhat shocked to hear the propaganda propounded on the program and he has talked to TURNER about this. TURNER somewhat apologized. He feels that TURNER is somewhat naive and is being taken in by some of the extremism of the Black Power philosophy.

FERGUSON promised to get background material from the personnel files of WDIA and furnish same to the writer concerning both TURNER and HIX.

He stated that HIX, he understands, has personally criticized TURNER for going to such extremes on the initial program.

FERGUSON stated that he has hired one JEROME HOWARD, a part-time employee, who also goes to Memphis State University, in an effort to get young blood on the announcing staff, and young HOWARD appears to have his feet on the ground and be a very sensible, middle-of-the-road Negro.